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S E C R E T BOGOTA 007397

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [CO](#) [KOMC](#) [ETTC](#) [OTRA](#) [PARM](#)
SUBJECT: INDUMIL DOWNSTREAM: TIGHTER CONTROLS, FEW LEAKS

REF: A. 05 BOGOTA 07332

[1](#)B. 05 BOGOTA 09715
[1](#)C. BOGOTA 03156

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood
Reasons: 1.4(a), (b), (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (S) Responding to possible weapons leakage to terrorist groups from state weapons manufacturer INDUMIL, econ/poloffs went beyond a routine factory licensing review (reftel C) to investigate inventory controls in the later stages of storage, transport, and retail sales. INDUMIL outlined comprehensive security measures implemented last year, and COLMIL intelligence assured us that military leaks account for a tiny portion of weapons captured from illegal groups. Most originate from cross-border sources. Police intelligence, in a reversal of their previous reports of INDUMIL corruption, corroborated the improvement. Tighter controls and police stings have made systematic siphoning from INDUMIL stocks more difficult and more uncommon. End Summary.

Context: Upstream OK, Downstream A Concern

[1](#)2. (C) A factory visit in March to parastatal weapons manufacturer INDUMIL (reftel C) determined that sufficient safeguards existed at the production facility to satisfy State Department licensing requirements. Still, in light of past seizures of INDUMIL-made armaments from illegal armed groups, doubts remained about leakages downstream in the supply chain. At the factory door, munitions leave INDUMIL control and become the responsibility of the COLMIL, through stages of storage, transport, and distribution via three channels -- military, commercial, and retail. Econoff and poloff investigated controls at these final stages and consulted with military and police intelligence on the sources of armaments to terrorist groups.

Arms Depots: Security, Surveillance, Screening

[1](#)3. (C) The COLMIL takes possession of armaments at the gate

of the production plant. INDUMIL's Director of Security, COL Nemesio Bojaca, said the military owns and controls a storage depot co-located at each of INDUMIL's three factory sites but delimited by fencing so as to be on separate COLMIL premises guarded by COLMIL troops. These depots follow the same security scheme as implemented within the plant, including civilian guards, military security, electronic surveillance, covert security, and counterintelligence. Screening of employees before hire includes a review of their records with all law enforcement authorities, a visit to the employee's home, and a 'loyalty test.' During the day, workers pass through metal detectors at factory entry and exit, wear pocketless uniforms, are forbidden to carry food or other property onto or off of factory premises, and are observed on security cameras.

Transport: Secrecy of Orders, Escorted Travel

¶4. (C) From the three central depots, arms are transported to commercial customers (mining companies using explosives) and to 37 retail outlets on COLMIL bases around the country. Product orders transmitted electronically are encrypted, and delivery logistics schedules are hand delivered in person to avoid interception. When shipments leave the main depot for the open road, they do so in columns of 10-20 trucks accompanied by sixty soldiers distributed through the convoy. During the trip, the soldiers have uninterrupted radio access to their command, and they call in at predefined points along the route. INDUMIL says problems at the transport stage are rare: the last was three years ago, when raw material for explosives were transported unguarded, intercepted by the FARC, and subsequently recovered by the COLAR. After that episode, the current safeguards were introduced. There have been no further incidents.

Retail: Inventory Auditing and Buyer Vetting

¶5. (C) Controls at retail outlets are twofold, relating to monitoring of arms inventory and screening of weapons sales to the public. Major (Ret.) Lucenie Torres, in charge of commercial outlets, said inventories are checked at multiple stages: verification on arrival (by item-specific serial numbers), daily stock count at close of business, monthly report to headquarters, and surprise spot checks by auditors. Computerized scanning and real-time database linkage to the MoD (reftel C) is limited to INDUMIL factories and to products destined for COLMIL use. Torres said this will someday be extended to retail outlets and to items for sale to the public, but she also said that goal will take a long time to implement. Sales to the public are authorized by the COLAR's Department of Commercial Arms Control (DCCA) based on a lengthy application form and law enforcement vetting checks. Sales are recorded in the National Arms Registry, a data base accessible by all COLMIL units that provides buyer name, purchase date, and weapon make and serial number.

Leaks Stanchd by Controls and Stings

¶6. (S) In a visit to the police intelligence directorate (DIPOL), Major Juan Carlos Buitrago confirmed that these controls -- many newly implemented late in 2005 -- have markedly reduced arms leaks from INDUMIL/COLMIL to terrorists. It is now much more difficult, he said, for items simply to go missing. The other main limiting factor, he said, is a series of DIPOL undercover operations that have dismantled corruption networks within INDUMIL:

- In May 2005, Colombian police (CNP) seized a large cache of INDUMIL ammunition and grenades, with documents indicating intended diversion to the FARC; INDUMIL staff were the primary suspects.

- In mid-summer 2005, police arrested a ring of former officers and NCOs of the CNP and COLAR, along with active INDUMIL employees, for diversion of COLAR weapons and ammunition to FARC, paramilitaries, and narcotrafficking groups.

- In May 2006, sensitive reporting indicated CNP jungla and carabinero instructors were under investigation for theft of armaments with intent to sell to the FARC.

FARC Explosives: From Ecuador Not the COLAR

¶7. (S) Emboffs met with the COLMIL watchdog on internal arms control, the Center of Military Counterintelligence (CECIM), to discuss sources of weapons to illegal armed groups. Concern centered mainly on explosives, the FARC's weapon of choice in hit-and-run attacks. CECIM's director, Colonel Gutierrez, said about half of the explosives used by the FARC were from Ecuador, with a substantial amount also from Venezuela. The third largest category was homemade, i.e. concocted by the FARC itself. Sergeant Madrigal of the COLMIL's Arms Tracking Investigations Center (CIERA) concurred that Ecuador was the lead source of explosives, citing corruption, poor military pay, poor inventory controls, and close relations between the FARC and the Ecuadorian military in border zones.

¶8. (S) COL Gutierrez estimated that only about five percent of FARC explosives were INDUMIL made. Whenever the latter were found in FARC hands, he said, CECIM conducted an investigation, tracing the serial numbers to the source of leakage. Of this amount investigated, CECIM said the majority tied back to commercial sales in the mining industry, typically to smaller players lacking proper storage controls. This was the finding in a recent high-profile case of INDUMIL explosives captured from the FARC in Tolima: the units still bearing serial numbers traced back to small

mining companies. Serial numbers had been removed from the other half of the units. CECIM maintained that only a tiny portion of explosives captured from the FARC was attributable to COLAR leaks. That small quantity, said Gutierrez, was siphoned bit by bit during field operations and gradually amassed by the FARC.

FARC Arms & Munitions: Inflows Across All Borders

¶9. (S) DIPOL's Major Buitrago agreed with COL Gutierrez's assessment that INDUMIL products comprised only a small portion (perhaps two percent) of arms seizures from illegal groups. With respect to weapons and munitions, those few made by INDUMIL were mainly stolen during terrorist ambushes of armed forces who had been legitimately issued the weapons. Such thefts are decreasing in line with the drop in direct guerilla attacks on the COLAR and CNP, said Buitrago. There was only one such attack in Tolima last year, resulting in the loss of two or three weapons, compared to 60 such attacks in 2001. The vast majority of arms and munitions come across Colombia's borders -- primarily from Panama and Venezuela -- sourced from international arms trafficking networks trading in weapons from Russia, Bulgaria, China, Germany, and the U.S. Buitrago noted that Peru was the source of a notorious shipment of 10,000 Russian AK-47's in the late 1990's, and Brazil is rumored today to be the transit country for surface-to-air missiles (MANPADs). No MANPADs have ever been used by the FARC.

Comment

¶10. (C) Any INDUMIL/COLMIL claims regarding internal controls on weapons warrant skepticism. Their story, however, is bolstered by confirmation from police

intelligence -- the same DIPOL branch which reported on past INDUMIL corruption and continues to investigate criminal activity in the arms supply chain. Ultimately the best proof of INDUMIL/COLMIL controls will be in continued monitoring of arms seizures from terrorists.

WOOD